

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BOGOTA 05308 072218Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1958
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA IMMEDIATE
AMCONSUL RECIFE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 5308

EXDIS

GRASILIA FOR ASST SECY TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, CASC, CO
SUBJECT: CURTIS AND STARR KIDNAPPING CASES

REFERENCE : BOGOTA 5214

1. I MET THIS AFTERNOON WITH VICE ADMIRAL MELENDEZ, THE
PROCURATOR GENERAL OF THE ARMED FORCES, AND MADE A FURTHER
PLEA THAT KLEIN BE ALLOWED TO LEAVE COLOMBIA. MELENDEZ WAS
SYMPATHETIC AND HELPFUL. HE CONTACTED THE MILITARY JUDGE IN
THE CASE AWHILE I WAS IN HIS OFFICE AND I BELIEVE ARRANGEMENTS
ARE NOW IN PLACE FOR KLEIN TO BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE AFTER
ONE MORE SESSION WITH THE JUDGE. UNFORTUNATELY WE WERE UNABLE
TO REACH KLEIN TO SET UP THE SESSION FOR LATER TODAY. IF IT
CAN BE DONE TOMORROW HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO LEAVE IMMEDIATELY
THEREAFTER.

2. WITH REGARD TO CURTIS' DEPARTURE, MELENDEZ INDICATED THAT
FOREIGN MINISTER HAD CONTACTED MINISTER OF JUSTICE AFTER I
HAD MET WITH THE FORMER AND THAT JUSTICE MINISTER TOOK THE
STEPS NECESSARY TO GET PERMISSION FOR CURTIS TO LEAVE.

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3. MELENDEZ ALSO INDICATED THAT JUDGE INTENDS TO PURSUE
THE CASE AGAINST THE TWO BRITISH INTERMEDIARIES AND THE
COLOMBIAN LAWYER WHO ARE UNDER ARREST. I ASKED HIM FOR HIS
INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW AS FAR AS RANSOM PAYMENTS ARE CON-
CERNED. MELENDEZ EXPLAINED THAT COLOMBIAN LAW PERMITS DIRECT
RANSOM PAYMENTS BY RELATIVES OF THE VICTIM BUT NOT OTHER PARTIES,

AS IN THE CURTIS CASE. (THIS OBVIOUSLY MERITS KEEPING
IN MIND WITH REGARD TO THE STARR CASE.) MELENDEZ ALSO SAID THAT
A WHOLE COMPANY OF TROOPS HAD BEEN DEPLOYED IN VARIOUS LOCATIONS
TO CAPTURE THE CURTIS KIDNAPPERS WHEN THE RANSOM WAS PAID BUT THAT THE

BRITISH INTERMEDIARIES FOILED THIS PLAN BY MAKING A
CLANDESTINE CONTACT. MELENDEZ ADDED THAT BRITISH FELT THEY HAD
TO DO THIS SO AS NOT TO ENDANGER CURTIS'S LIVE.
MELENDEZ SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND THEIR MOTIVATION BUT THAT THEY
SHOULD INSTEAD HAVE SOUGHT SOME "COMPROMISE" COURSE OF ACTION
THAT WOULD NOT HAVE THROWN OFF THE GOC AUTHORITIES COMPLETELY.
DREXLER

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Message Attributes

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